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DASHAVATAR

MATSYA

AMONG THE INCARNATIONS OF LORD VISHNU, MATSYA IS THE FIRST AVATAR. WHEN LORD VISHNU CAME TO KNOW OF THE GREAT DESTRUCTION AWAITING UPON THE EARTH, HE PRESENTED HIMSELF IN FRONT OF KING VAIVATSVA MANU. KING MANU WAS HOWEVER PROUD OF HIS WEALTH AND POSSESSIONS. WHEN LORD VISHNU HAD TO BREAK THIS PRIDE AND SO IN HIS MATSYA AVATAR HE KEPT GROWING, FINALLY MAKING MANU REALISE THAT IT IS LORD VISHNU INDEED. LORD VISHNU DIRECTED MANU TO GATHER ALL CREATURES AND GET THEM ON THE BOAT TO KEEP THEM SAFE FROM DESTRUCTION. WHEN THE FLOODS AND FIRES CAME FINALLY, LORD VISHNU APPEARED AS A HUGE FISH WITH HORNS LETTING MANU TIE THE BOAT TO THE HORNS, LEADING THE CREATURES TO SAFETY.

KURMA

IN THE GREAT WAR OF GODS AND DEMONS (DEVAS AND ASURAS) TO ATTAIN THE "AMRIT" (POTION OF IMMORTALITY), MANDARA MOUNTAIN WHICH WAS BEING USED AS THE CHURNING STAFF STARTED TO SINK. LORD VISHNU THEN TOOK THE INCARNATION OF A GIANT TORTOISE TO BEAR THE WEIGHT OF THE MOUNTAIN ON HIS BACK.

NARSIMHA

KING HIRANYAKASHIPU OPPRESSED RELIGIOUS THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS IN PEOPLE INCLUDING HIS SON PRAHLAD. THE KING WAS PROTECTED BY BRAHMA AND HENCE COULD NOT BE KILLED BY ANY MEANS. LORD VISHNU HAD TO TAKE THE FORM OF A HALF-MAN AND HALF-LION. BODY OF A MAN AND CLAWS AND HEAD OF A LION TO SLAY THE EVIL KING AND BRING PEACE TO HIS FAMILY AND SUBJECTS.

VAMANA

TO RID KING BALI OF HIS PRIDE, LORD VISHNU TOOK THE VAMANA FORM AND MET KING BALI DURING A YAGNA (RELIGIOUS OFFERING). HE ASKED FOR 3 THINGS FROM THE KING TO WHICH THE KING READILY AGREED. LORD VISHNU THEN GREW BIGGER AND STEPPED ON THE EARTHLY REALM FOLLOWED BY THE HEAVENLY REALM. QUICKLY REALISING WHO HE WAS, BALI OFFERED LORD VISHNU TO STEP ON HIS HEAD AND CONQUER THE NETHERWORLD TOO.

PARSHURAMA

OUT OF RAGE, PARSHURAMA HAD TAKEN A VOW TO FREE THE EARTH OF KSHATRIYAS 21 TIMES. HE STOOD BY HIS VOW AND KILLED ALL KSHATRIYA BEINGS TWENTY-ONE TIMES, FILLING 5 LAKES WITH THEIR BLOOD. HE WAS STOPPED BY HIS GRANDFATHER – RISHI RUCHEEKA. HE IS A CHIRANJEEVI AND IS CONSIDERED TO HAVE TAKEN PENANCE AT MAHENDRAGIRI.

RAMA

AMONG THE INCARNATIONS OF LORD VISHNU, RAM IS LARGELY WORSHIPPED IN HINDUISM AND IS CONSIDERED A DEITY. HE KILLED RAVANA AND BROUGHT HIS WIFE, SITA BACK TO HIS KINGDOM. HE IS CONSIDERED A SYMBOL OF MARYADA PURUSHOTTAM (PERFECT MAN). HE IS THE PERSONIFICATION OF TRUTH, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND IS OFTEN CALLED "DHIRODATTA" – A PERSONALITY WHO IS WELL BALANCED, HIGH-SPIRITED, PASSIONATE AND AMBITIOUS.

BUDDHA

PEACE AND CALM! WHAT BETTER WAY TO DESCRIBE KING GAUTAM BUDDHA BUT THESE TWO WORDS. HE IS THE CREATOR AND SPREADER OF BUDDHISM IN THIS WORLD. HE IS OFTEN SEEN AS A COMPASSIONATE TEACHER WHO PREACHED THE WORLD REGARDING THE PATH OF AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE) AND HELPED THEM ATTAIN THE ULTIMATE PEACE IN THE WORLD.

KALKI

KALKI IS DESCRIBED AS THE FINAL INCARNATION OF LORD VISHNU. WHEN THE EFFECTS OF EVIL STARTED TO SET IN THE WORLD AND THE DAWN OF KALIYUG BEGAN, KALKI CAME TO THE RESCUE ON TOP OF A MAGNIFICENT WHITE HORSE WITH A SWORD DRAWN TO DESTROY EVILS AT ONCE. HE APPEARS WHEN CHAOS AND EVIL BECOME UNCONTROLLABLE IN THE WORLD. KALYUG HAS TO END FOR SATYAYUG TO BEGIN THE NEXT CYCLE OF EXISTENCE.

THESE INCARNATIONS HAVE LEFT US WITH GREAT LIFE LESSONS THAT WE SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND AND CLOSE TO OUR HEART.

KRISHNA

THIS AVATAR WAS FULL OF LIFE, LOVE, COMPASSION, PLAYFULNESS AND MOST IMPORTANT DUTY. HE IS A LOVED AND EXTENSIVELY WORSHIPPED DEITY IN HINDUISM. HE IS A GREAT PREACHER AND ONE OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN MAHABHARATA, BHAGAVAD PURANA AND SHRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA. A LOT OF HIS FOLLOWERS AND HISTORICAL TEXTS ALSO SUGGEST THAT KRISHNA IS THE ULTIMATE GOD AND THE 10 INCARNATIONS KNOWN TO MANKIND ARE HIS INCARNATIONS AS OPPOSED TO LORD VISHNU'S. IN SUCH CASES, BALARAMA TAKES THE POSITION OF 8TH AVATAR AND BUDDHA BECOMES THE 9TH AVATAR.

BALARAMA(8TH AVATAR AND BROTHER OF KRISHNA)

THE EIGHTH INCARNATION OF LORD VISHNU TALKS ABOUT THE MIGHTY BALARAMA WHO HAS GUIDED AND CONSULTED LORD KRISHNA FROM TIME TO TIME. BALARAMA AND KRISHNA LIVED A SIMPLE VILLAGE LIFE IN VRINDAVAN WITH THEIR PARENTS – NANDA AND YASHODA. THEY WERE GIVEN THE DUTIES OF HERDING THE COWS, PASTEURIZING THE GROUND AND TAKING CARE OF THE COWS.